

What is claimed is:

1. A method for designing a configurable furniture product comprising the steps of:

accessing a plurality of 3-D modular furniture components images and data stored in a database via a computer network;

displaying a portion of the stored plurality of 3-D modular furniture components images and data selectable by a user;

placing one or more of the displayed modular furniture components images in a displayed screen responsive to a set of predetermined placement rules; and

arranging the placed modular furniture components to design the configurable furniture product.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the computer network is Internet and the database is accessible via a web site.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of electronically transmitting a purchase order responsive to the designed furniture product.

4. The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of electronically transmitting fulfillment instructions responsive to the purchase order.

5. The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of electronically transmitting shipping instructions responsive to the purchase order.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of displaying a specification of the designed furniture product for review by the user.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the displayed specification includes information about cost, quantity, size, and description of each component in the designed furniture product.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of editing the designed furniture product.

9. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of assigning one or more options to the designed furniture product.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the assigned options include color and texture.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
displaying a catalog including a plurality of pre-arranged furniture products;
browsing through the displayed catalog;
selecting a pre-arranged furniture product; and
modifying the selected pre-arranged furniture product to design a customized furniture product.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of saving the designed configurable furniture product for a future use.

13. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of saving the designed configurable furniture product in a customized catalog.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of electronically transmitting the saved furniture product over the computer network.

15. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:
creating an employee group;
adding employee information to the created group;
assigning requirements to the created group; and
restricting each employee in the group to the assigned requirements for designing the configurable furniture product.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of electronically transmitting a message to each employee in the group.

17. The method of claim 15, further comprising the steps of reviewing the designed configuration of each employee in the group; and approving the reviewed configuration.

18. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of notifying an employee if the employee's designed configuration violates any of the assigned requirements.

19. A method for designing a configurable furniture product utilizing a system of modular furniture components, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a plurality of 3-D modular furniture components images and data in a database accessible via a computer network;

storing a plurality of requirements input by an administrator;

displaying a portion of the plurality of 3-D modular furniture components images and data selectable by a user;

accepting inputs from the user for placing one or more of the displayed modular furniture components images and data in a displayed screen; and

configuring the placed modular furniture components images and data to design the configurable furniture product responsive to the stored requirements.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of preventing the placement of the modular furniture components if the placement is in violation of the stored requirements.

21. The method of claim 19, wherein the computer network is Internet and the database is accessible via a web site.

22. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of electronically transmitting a purchase order responsive to the designed furniture product.

23. The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of electronically transmitting fulfillment instructions responsive to the purchase order.

24. The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of electronically transmitting shipping instructions responsive to the purchase order.

25. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of displaying a specification of the designed furniture product for review by the user.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein the displayed specification includes information about cost, quantity, size, and description of each component in the designed furniture product.

27. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of editing the designed furniture product.

28. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of assigning one or more options to the designed furniture product.

29. The method of claim 19, further comprising the steps of:
displaying a catalog including a plurality of pre-arranged furniture products;

browsing through the displayed catalog;

selecting a pre-arranged furniture product; and

modifying the selected pre-arranged furniture product to design a customized furniture product.

30. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of saving the designed configurable furniture product in a customized catalog.

31. The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of notifying the user if the designed configuration violates any of the stored requirements.

32. A system for designing a configurable furniture product comprising:

a database accessible via a computer network for storing a plurality of 3-D modular furniture components images and data;

a display screen for displaying a portion of the plurality of 3-D modular furniture components images and data selectable by a user;

a placement module for placing one or more of the displayed modular furniture components images in a displayed screen responsive to a set of predetermined placement rules; and

means for arranging the placed modular furniture components to design the configurable furniture product.

33. The system of claim 32, wherein the computer network is Internet and the database is accessible via a web site.

34. The system of claim 32, further comprising means for electronically transmitting a purchase order responsive to the designed furniture product.

35. The system of claim 34, further comprising means for electronically transmitting fulfillment instructions responsive to the purchase order.

36. The system of claim 34, further comprising means for electronically transmitting shipping instructions responsive to the purchase order.

37. The system of claim 32, further comprising means for displaying a specification of the designed furniture product for review by the user.

38. The system of claim 37, wherein the displayed specification includes information about cost, quantity, size, and description of each component in the designed furniture product.

39. The system of claim 32, further comprising means for editing the designed furniture product.

40. The system of claim 32, further comprising means for assigning one or more options to the designed furniture product.

41. The system of claim 32, further comprising:
means for displaying a catalog including a plurality of pre-arranged furniture products;
means for browsing through the displayed catalog;
means for selecting a pre-arranged furniture product; and
means for modifying the selected pre-arranged furniture product to design a customized furniture product.

42. The system of claim 32, further comprising a memory for saving the designed configurable furniture product.

43. The system of claim 42, further comprising means for electronically transmitting the saved furniture product over the computer network.

44. The system of claim 32, further comprising:
means for creating an employee group;
means for adding employee information to the created group;
and
means for assigning requirements to the created group; and

means for restricting each employee in the group to the assigned requirements for designing the configurable furniture product.

45. The system of claim 44, further comprising means for electronically transmitting a message to each employee in the group.

46. The system of claim 44, further comprising means for reviewing the designed configuration of each employee in the group; and means for approving the reviewed configuration.

47. The system of claim 44, further comprising means for notifying an employee if the employee's designed configuration violates any of the assigned requirements.

48. A system of configurable unified modular furniture components comprising:

- a plurality of modular furniture components;
- a database including electronic images and specifications of the plurality of modular furniture components;
- a website accessible by a furniture end-user;
- a configurator accessible via the web site by the furniture end-user for configuring a furniture product including a selected portion of the plurality of modular furniture components utilizing the images and specifications stored in the database, wherein the configured furniture product is assembled using the selected portion of the plurality of modular furniture components and information generated by the configurator.

49. The system of claim 48, wherein the plurality of modular furniture components includes one or more of a rail, a clip, a fastener, and a fixture.

50. The system of claim 48, wherein the plurality of modular furniture components includes a plurality of rails, means for securing a fixture to the rails, and a connector for adjoining two rails.

51. The system of claim 49, wherein the fixture is one or more of a hanging rod, a board, a gusset, and a shelf.

52. The system of claim 48, wherein the configurator includes:

a display screen for displaying a selectable portion of the electronic images and specifications from the database;

a placement module for placing one or more of the displayed modular furniture components images in a displayed screen responsive to a set of predetermined placement rules; and

means for arranging the placed modular furniture components to configure the furniture product.

53. The system of claim 48, wherein the configurator includes means for electronically transmitting a purchase order responsive to the configured furniture product.

54. The system of claim 53, wherein the configurator includes means for electronically transmitting fulfillment instructions responsive to the purchase order.

55. The system of claim 53, wherein the configurator includes means for electronically transmitting shipping instructions responsive to the purchase order.

56. The system of claim 48, wherein the configurator includes means for displaying a specification of the designed furniture product for review by the user.

57. The system of claim 56, wherein the displayed specification includes information about cost, quantity, size, and description of each component in the designed furniture product.

58. The system of claim 48, wherein the configurator includes means for editing the designed furniture product.